Marlinton Presbyterian Church

Chapels

charter members, coming from the Marlinton Presbyterian Church, were Mr. and Mrs. Harper Adkison, Mrs. Vinnie Apperson, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Barnes, Mr. and Mrs. Eustace Brindle, Miss Polly Gay, Miss Susie Kellison, C. F. Loudermilk, Mr. and Mrs. Withrow McClintic, A. W. McNeill, Meade McNeill, Miss Goldie McNeill, Miss Elizabeth McNeill, Miss Louise McNeill, John C. McNeill, Moody McNeill, Miss Mary Kennison, Mrs. A. A. Rucker, Miss Audrey Rucker, Mrs. Tone Lightner. Mrs. Lee Overholt joined at the first service.

Services also were held at Spruce Flat, Green Hill, Bucks Run School House and Swago School House.

Among student pastors were C. M. Hanna, M. D. Newton, John C. B. McLaughlin; Rev. M. P. Calhoun, mission pastor, one year; W. I. Howell.

On September 10, 1929, the Swago Church was dissolved by Presbytery upon request and the members transferred to the Marlinton Presbyterian Church and has been Buckeye Presbyterian Chapel since.

Calvin W. Price walked to Buckeye on Sunday afternoons to lead Sunday School in the 30's.

W. D. (Denver) Lively came in 1948 as student pastor in the area for three years. The church had been abandoned for several years and was being used as a cow and sheep barn. It was cleaned and painted--35 gallons of paint--with donations coming from around the county. Acie Bryant, Glen McClung, J. D. Singletary followed as student ministers; then Rev. Sidney Pinch, Rev. Robert Ray, and Rev. Willis Cornelius today, and it is an active, on-going congregation.

The building was built about 1875 by the Methodist congregation to replace a log church. The McNeill and Buckley families contributed most of the materials and labor. The big timbers extended from one side of the church to the other; boards were cut on "up and down" mill. The church is known as Bethel and is used by the Presbyterians with permission of the Buckley family.

MARY'S CHAPEL

Mary's Chapel was dedicated as a Presbyterian Church on November 3, 1888, to be used by other denominations when not used by Presbyterians. It was built on the William Gibson property; Mr. and Mrs. William Gibson were the second couple to settle on the north side of Elk Mountain. The church was named after Mary Sharp Gibson, wife of David Gibson, the grandmother of Mrs. Allie Gibson, who today lives near the church; this couple paid off the debt on the building.

At one time the Methodists held services the first Sunday, Presbyterians the second, Baptists the third, and the fourth Sunday was Assembly Sunday.

Ministers from the Marlinton Presbyterian Church and college and seminary students

The First One Hundred Years

First there was the WORD, and the WORD was with us. Then there was a Need, and it was with us.

There was a need for a church because the nearest church was at Huntersville and too many people were growing up without God's Word. Responsible people in Marlin's Bottom, as Marlinton was then known, saw this need and, with Andrew M. McGlaughlin as Superintendent, started a Sunday school in 1880 in the one room school house that stood on Price Run a little upstream from the Lewisburg and Marlin's Bottom Turnpike (Rt. 219). This Sunday School continued to grow and the Rev. David S. Sydenstricker, pastor of the Oak Grove Presbyterian Church at Hillsboro, started to hold regular meetings at the school house.

On April 2, 1881, a group met at the school house to start the proceedings for organizing a church. This was formally done on April 23, 1881, and the Marlin's Bottom Presbyterian Church came into existence with twelve charter members. They were Mr. and Mrs. A. M. McGlaughlin, Harper McGlaughlin, Mrs. Elizabeth McGlaughlin, Mrs. Lucy Gay, Miss Nancy G. Price, Mrs. Caroline Warwick, Mrs. Sarah M. Apperson, Mr. and Mrs. James Cleek, Miss Emma Warwick, and George M. Kee. Of this group, Miss Emma Warwick survived until the Fifty Year Anniversary of the church. A. M. McGlaughlin and George Kee were elected and ordained as the first elders on that day. Rev. Sydenstricker was supply pastor and preached once a month until September 1885 when the Rev. William T. Price arrived to become the first resident pastor. He was also pastor of the Huntersville Presbyterian Church.

Services continued to be held in the school house until the spring of 1883 when a proper church building was completed on a tract of land donated to the church by the McGlaughlins. This land is located at what is now the corner of Eighth Street and Second Avenue and is the site of the present church building. Construction was started in the fall of 1882 using local materials and labor, mostly supplied by church members and other friends of the community. For a number of years this building was used not only by the Presbyterians, but by other denominations as well. A preaching schedule for November 1893 lists service conducted by Rev. C. M. Sarver of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Rev. C. S. Morgan of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. W. H. Hart who was probably of the Episcopal Church, as well as Rev. Price. The Baptists also used the building for services.

The first deacons, Walter Mann, Edwin McGlaughlin, and Andrew Price, were elected on May 21, 1893, and ordained on June 18, 1893.

The name of the church was

growth from the original twelve, a modern building, a strong Ladies Auxiliary, and a Sunday School enrollment of over 500 in five Sunday Schools - Marlinton, Elk, Stony Creek, Stillwell, and Buckeye.

Except for changes in shrubbery and trees on the grounds, the exterior of the church building has remained nearly the same over the years. In 1955 the Staton Building property adjoining the church lot on Eighth Street was acquired and the building torn down to enlarge the church lawn. Remodeling work on the interior of the church was begun in late 1966 and work on the dining area was nearly finished on March 9, 1967, when a flood hit. This caused the whole basement to be remodeled. Work on new Sunday School rooms was done, new flooring installed in the kitchen and dining room, and ceilings lowered. Refurbishing the upper part of the building was undertaken in 1969. Electric heat replaced the coal furnace and fire doors were built at the back of the church. All woodwork was cleaned, the pews were rebuilt, and the pulpit, choir chairs, and communion table refinished. Also wall to wall carpeting was put down, the choir loft rebuilt, the upstairs Sunday School rooms improved, and a parking area added to the church property. The work was completed in early 1970.

Membership in 1981 is 242 and the program of the Church includes Sunday Morning Worship, Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, Children and Adult Choirs, Women of the Church, Vacation Bible School, Bible Study, and two chapels, Mary's Chapel and Buckeye Chapel. We look forward to continued service in the Lord in the coming century.

ELDERS

Andrew M. McGlaughlin, George M. Kee, John W. Warwick, George Baxter, S. W. Holt, A. S. Livesay, R. B. Slaven, E. D. King, N. R. Price, Z. S. Smith, Sr., J. A. Sydenstricker, S. N. Hench, J. W. Baxter, L. M. McClintic, C. W. Price, A. P. Edgar, Zane Moore, T. S. McNeel, S. L. Brown, James M. Bear, E. C. Smith, E. H. Wade, J. A. McLaughlin, W. L. Davis, G. D. Stemple, June McElwee, E. C. Daetwyler, H. M. Warren, W. H. Avery, John T. Bear, James M. Bear, Richard F. Currence, W. L. Davis, Dharl Dever, Grant Harper, Beecher Meadows, Francis McElwee, Shad McLaughlin, R. R. Pittman, E. J. Shafer, Charles A. Sharp, Z. S. Smith, Jr., Raymond Wiley, Allen Clark Young, Fred Burns, Sr., Neal McKissic, Harold W. Pryor, Layman Davis, John E. Pritchard, Lamar Beasley, Paul Gladwell, Jane Price Sharp, Stanley Loudermilk, Stanley McNeill, Mary Elizabeth Weiford, Ann Hannah, Austin Sharp, Ralph Barlow, William Price McNeel, Marie Miller, Billy Clay, Lake Reed, Keith Shaw, Boyd Vandevender, Fred Morrison, John Geiger, Don Payne, Thomas C. Burns, E. G. Herold, Jr., Clarence Davis, Jr., Chester Vanscoy, Harold Shifflett, J. M. Mallow, Layton Beverage, Sherman Gibson, Harvey Galford, Jaynell Tibbs, Robert Viers, Vandel

Harper Nelson, Tom Burns, Eugene Simmons, Tim Jones, Joe Friel, Melvin Moore, Edward McLaughlin, Robert Kelley, Fredric Smith, Harvey Galford, Keith Moore, Samuel Price Barlow, Layton Beverage, Stephen Barnisky, Ellett Gragg, Gerald McNeill, Chester Vanscoy, Clarence Davis, Jr., Clarence Friel, Don Circosta, Richard Barlow, Sherman Gibson, Wilbert Smith, John C. Sharp, James Lowell Smith, Pearl Carter Ward, William I. Barlow.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Four men have gone from this Church into the ministry: Henry W. McLaughlin, whose son, John C. B., is also a minister; Ewell W. Wiley; Basil P. Sharp; and Clarence Davis, Jr.

Daughters of the Church serve also: Grace McLaughlin, daughter of A. M. McLaughlin, first elder of this Church, married Rev. J. B. Massey, professor of Bible at Hampden-Sydney College; Agnes Price, daughter of deacon Andrew Price, married Rev. George Cleaveland, retired, Richmond, Virginia; Caroline Edgar, daughter of deacon A. P. Edgar, married Rev. Elwood Clower, White Sulphur Springs; and Mrs. Sharla Gladwell Sherman is presently in mission work.

MEN OF THE CHURCH

An active Men of the Church was organized February, 1949, and they continued until about 1976. Among the presidents were Raymond Wiley, Harry D. Cochran, R. F. Currence, Edward S. Wilson, Charles A. Sharp, Keith Allen, Dharl Dever, Fred Burns, Sr., Francis McElwee, Arnold Weiford, E. C. Daetwyler, Lamar Beasley, Walter Jett, Robert Kelly, Layton Beverage, William McNeel, John Geiger. Fred Morrison was vice-president of the Men of Greenbrier Presbytery for many years. Several men and boys attended the Assembly Men's Rallies in Nashville and Atlanta.

YOUNG PEOPLE

First it was Willing Workers, then Christian Endeavor, and since the 30's Presbyterian Youth. Camps and conferences, rallies, many projects, Christian Youth Week in the high school, Easter Sunrise Service, Youth Sunday, Youth Quadrennial, Christmas caroling, and other activities have filled the years.

A Youth Choir was organized in 1937 by Mrs. John Bear. Then for about twenty years Mrs. Ben Morgan directed an outstanding choir. Other youth choir directors have been Mrs. Ernest Flaniken, Mrs. Keith Allen, Mrs. Fredric Smith. Also we have had Junior Choirs; Mrs. Rebecca Perry is our present director.

These two groups were succeeded by the Woman's Auxiliary which was organized on September 26, 1921. The first officers of the Auxiliary were Miss Virginia Sydenstricker, President, Mrs. Andrew Price, Vice-President, Mrs. S. N. Hench, Secretary, and Mrs. Burton Wilson, Treasurer. The first Circle Chairmen were Miss Susan Gay, Circle No. 1, Mrs. H. H. Orr, Circle No. 2, Mrs. E. G. Herold, Circle No. 3, and Mrs. R. B. Slaven, Circle No. 4. The change of the name to "Women of the Church," as it is today, came about 1931.

The Marlinton women celebrated the first Women's Birthday Party in 1922, on the tenth anniversary of the formation of the Woman's Auxiliary in the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

The following are the Presidents of the various women's groups that have been found on record (not in order): Mrs. Andrew Price, Mrs. Edna Wade, Mrs. Z. S. Smith, Sr., Mrs. J. A. Wade, Mrs. G. H. Patterson, Mrs. H. A. Yeager, Mrs. T. S. Patterson, Mrs. J. A. Sydenstricker, Mrs. T. S. McNeel, Mrs. Anna L. Price, Mrs. H. H. Orr, Mrs. A. S. Rachal, Mrs. John McLaughlin, Mrs. Kitty Wiseman Smith, Miss Helen Smith, Mrs. Layman Davis, Mrs. Leeta Killingsworth, Mrs. Louise Beard, Mrs. Dewey Stemple, Mrs. Z. S. Smith, Jr., Mrs. Lucille Burns, Miss Peggy Smith, Mrs. Beatrice Gladwell, Mrs. Jerry Jett, Mrs. Blanche Sharp Geiger, Mrs. J. S. Reynolds, Mrs. Lewis Gay, Mrs. Eva Jane White, Mrs. Ward Barlow, Mrs. Dharl Dever, Mrs. Alice K. Jackson.

Honorary Life Members are: Mrs. Florence Sydenstricker, Mrs. Andrew Price, Mrs. Z. S. Smith, Jr., Mrs. Louise Beard, Mrs. Leeta B. Killingsworth, Mrs. John Pritchard, Mrs. Issac Withers, Mrs. E. C. Daetwyler, Mrs. Pearl C. Ward, Mrs. R. F. Currence, Mrs. Edna Bear, Mrs. Blanche Sharp Geiger, Mrs. Jane Price Sharp.

Historians of record since 1933 were: Polly Reynolds, Susan Gay, Jane P. Sharp, Nelle Young, Nancy Currence, Beatrice Gladwell, Helen Nottingham, Pearl Ward, Sharla Gladwell, Barbara McClure.

The Women of the Church in 1981 are organized into four circles, have Council meeting each month, special Birthday, Joy Gift and Mission programs, contribute to the benevolence giving of the Church, help with Bible School, serve family suppers, serve barbecued chicken dinner for Pioneer Days, and help with all activities of the Church.

Those serving in addition to officers listed on first page are: Fayree Malcomb, Personal Faith & Family Life, Peggy Smith, Christian Community Action, Eva Jane White, Ecumenical Missions & Relations, Edna Bear, Leadership & Resources, Jerry McLaughlin, Fayree Malcomb, Delphia King, Ethel Barlow, Dreama Burns, Social Services; Circle Chairmen, Marguerite Gay, Peggy Smith, Shelia Burns.

MINISTERS

DAVID SPOTTS SYDENSTRICKER, born Greenbrier County January 2, 1835, died May 1, 1913; graduate of Lewisburg Male Academy, Union Theological Seminary 1870, D.D. [illegible]

Nickell. Graduate of Hampden-Sydney College and Union Theological Seminary, 1893. Served Carmel and Hillsdale, 1893-1900, later served Frankford and Lacy 1924-27.

1908 - 1913 - ADOLPHE SYLVESTER RACHAL, born New Orleans, Louisiana, January 5, 1867, died May 30, 1958. First wife, Mary Baskerville Carrington, died 1904; second wife, Elvira Munford Ellis. Graduate of Central Normal College, Central University of Kentucky, and Union Theological Seminary, 1895. Served as pastor of Marlinton, Huntersville and Westminster. Later served Bramwell and then Low Moor, Virginia.

1914 - 1920 - JOHN MACK WALKER, born Burlington, North Carolina, April 7, 1883, died December 11, 1950. His wife was Annie Muller English; four children, Rev. John Mack Walker, Jr., Thomas English Walker, Lila Peck married Rev. C. L. MacRae, and Sarah English married Rev. J. T. Womack, Jr. Graduate of Davidson College (D.D. 1933) and Union Theological Seminary 1912. He went from Marlinton to Steel Creek Church at Charlotte, North Carolina.

1921 - 1927 - HARVEY H. ORR, a native of Kentucky, was 35 when he became our minister on July 31, 1921. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister. Worked seven years for Pennsylvania Railroad. Graduate of Centre College and Louisville Seminary, 1914. (D. D. Davis & Elkins) Served a church in Arkansas and at Malden before coming to Marlinton; went from Marlinton to Richwood, then to Eleanor before retiring. Died August 2, 1966. His wife Minerva Collins; their children, Elizabeth, Rachel, Rebecca, Virginia.

1927 - 1932 - KIRBY V. BOWEN, a native of Indiana, answered the call to the ministry in the Friends Church, taught in college and seminary, minister of a large congregation in Greensboro, North Carolina. Joined the Presbyterian Church, went to Union Theological Seminary, then to Marlinton. During his pastorate here he died unexpectedly of heart failure while on a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Bowen, in Indianapolis, on November 1, 1932, at the age of 45. His wife, Alta Cox, died in August, 1980. Their daughter, Vera, lives in Kansas.

1933 - 1938 - SAMUEL BAXTER LAPSLEY, named for his uncle, the African missionary, was born at Vine Hill, Alabama, January 12, 1889, died May 31, 1956. Wife, Elizabeth Irwin, who now lives in Lexington, Virginia, children, Elizabeth Irwin, Elsie Kay, and Norvell Alexander. He was with U. S. Army Engineers before going to Union Theological Seminary, 1923. After leaving Marlinton he was Superintendent of Home Missions of the Synod of West Virginia, later Educational Secretary of Executive Committee of Home Missions for the General Assembly.

1938 - 1946 - JAMES CRAIG WOOL, born Oxford, North Carolina, [illegible]

1947; son, Robert Ernest. Graduate of Southwestern and Union Theological Seminary, 1950. Th. M. 1958. First pastorate Craigsville, Virginia, then Marlinton; went to Birmingham, Alabama; presently at Cocoa, Florida.

1958 - 1965 - WILLIAM EUGENE PIERCE, a native of Spencer, North Carolina, was born October 6, 1930; married Shirley Ann Conrad at Winston Salem, North Carolina, August 28, 1954; children Michelle Marie and Dale Eugene. Graduate of Davidson College and Louisville Seminary. Pastor of Pizgah Presbyterian Church in Kentucky before coming to Marlinton. From here he went to Elizabethton, Tennessee, then to Bates Memorial Church, Huntington, where he presently serves.

1965 - 1968 - FRED WILLIS WALKER, born Jefferson County, Tennessee, February 13, 1920; married Sarah Burford Matthews in Madison, Tennessee, June 2, 1944; children, James Lawson, Fred Willis, Jr., and Mary Bowman. Graduate of Bethel College, McKenzie, Tennessee, and Cumberland Theological Seminary. From Marlinton he went to Graham Church, Bluefield, and presently serves at Natural Bridge, Virginia.

1968 - 1973 - DONALD EDWARD WOOD, born Ashtabula, Ohio, March 4, 1916; married June Dorothy Oswald at Jamestown, New York, August 6, 1936; children, Carol, Katherine Elaine, Betty Lee, John Stephen. Was a business man; graduated Columbia Theological Seminary and ordained 1965; pastor Centerville, Greenville, Mount Pleasant and James Memorial before coming to Marlinton, later served Samuel Davies Church, Mechanicsville, Virginia, and presently is at Lynn Garden, Kingsport, Tennessee.

1974 - RICHARD LEE NEWKIRK was born in Washington, D. C., June 30, 1933, and is a graduate of Hampden-Sydney College, Union Theological Seminary 1958, with M. A. from Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Married Paula Margaret Ball in Gainesville, Georgia, on May 23, 1959; children, Mark Andrew and Elizabeth Pauline. Pastor at South Williamson and Scarlet Glen, Warfordsburg, Pennsylvania (only U. S. Church in PA) and Fieldstone Church at Mooresville, North Carolina, before coming to Marlinton.

There have been three Assistant or Associate Pastors for the Chapels and serving as Pastor of Huntersville, Westminster and Stony Creek Churches;

SIDNEY PINCH, native of Callicoon, New York, born April 12, 1934; graduate of Princeton University, Mansfield College, Harvard Divinity School, post graduate work at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Ordained in Marlinton Presbyterian Church in 1959, served until 1961; now preaching in United Presbyterian Church at Union, New Jersey.

The Church has had four manses. Rev. Price had his own home so a manse was built when Rev. Nickell came, and it is told he helped haul the lumber up the hill from the Killingsworth mill, each day's lumber as needed. This house was later sold to Z. S. Smith, Sr., and is the one remodeled and now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Burns, Sr., on Smith Hill. When the Rachals came, they wanted to live in town; a manse at 614 Second Avenue, now owned by Whitman Hull, was purchased. About 1928, this was sold and another manse purchased, this time a little closer to the Church, the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Doug Dunbrack, at 700 Second Avenue. The John McLaughlins left their home to the Church upon payment of a certain amount of money to their heirs and the present manse was acquired at Ninth Street and Ninth Avenue in 1950.

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Mrs. Andrew (Grace Clark) Price was an early organist at the Church, probably from her marriage in 1897. Mrs. Zed S. (Mattie Beard) Smith became organist in the early 20's and was faithful until her death in 1967. After that Libby Graham, Anna Cornell Moore, Jaynell Graham, Linda Barker, Peggy McNeill, Linda Burns Smith played the organ until 1974, when Mrs. R. L. (Paula) Newkirk came to our congregation and has been organist since that time.

The present organ was given as a memorial by Mrs. Alice Kramer in memory of John and Florence Kramer Sydenstricker. The organ before had been electrified but originally it was pumped by a big handle, and various boys in the congregation held this important job. This organ is now in the Buckeye Chapel.

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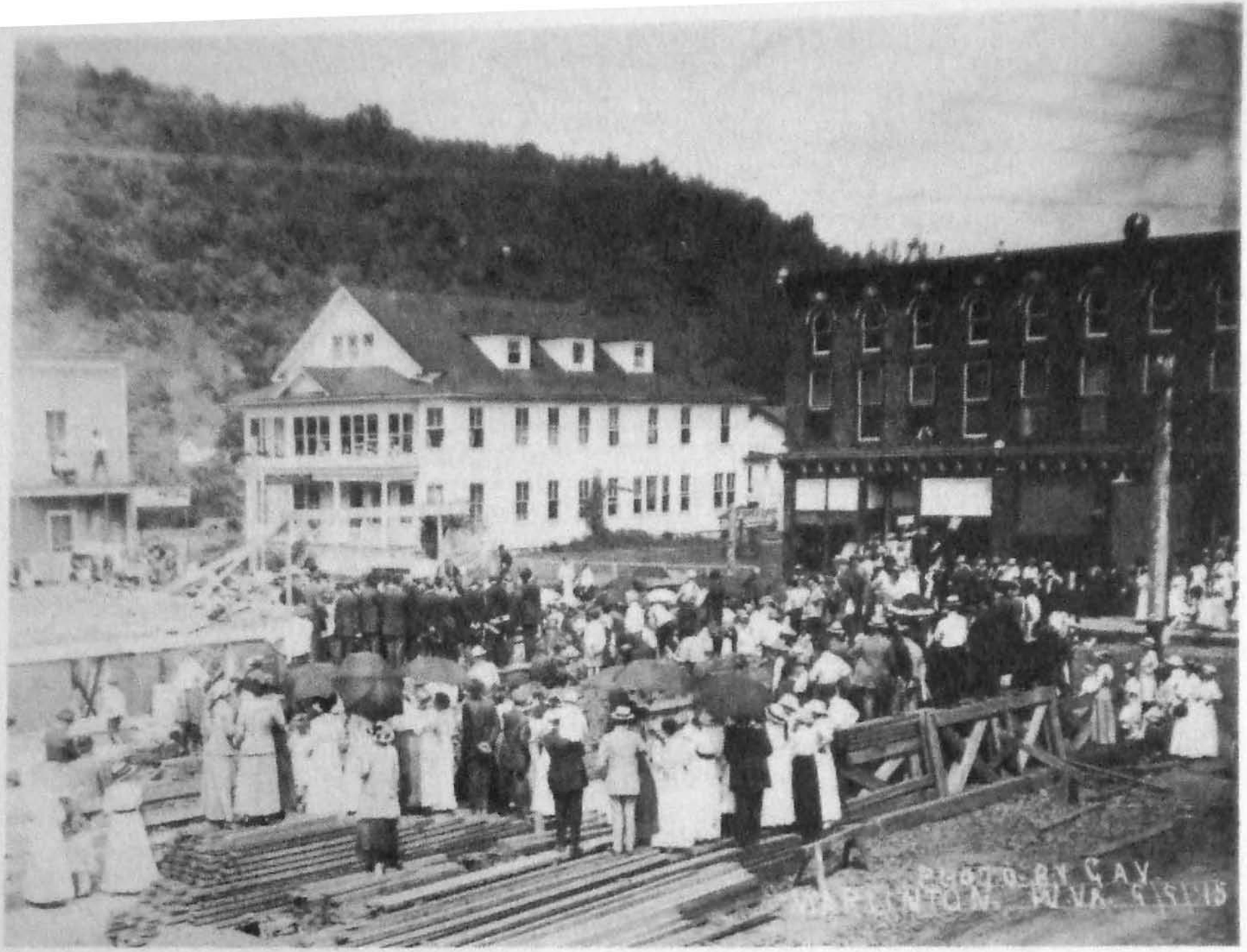

Laying of Cornerstone 1915